To any of our Subscribers *who are in possession of copies of Nos.* 3, 4, *and* 8, *in an unsoiled state, and who do not require them for binding up, we shall be happy to return the full sum of* Threepence *in exchange for such Nos., they being now entirely out of print.*

THE BUILDER,

No. XXXI.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1843.

It has fallen in our way to make a limited tour of the provinces since our last writing, and in such measure we have been enabled to ascertain the state of public feeling and action, in reference to building matters, and to collect some little more of building statistics to add to our previous stock—not that we have learnt much of any thing new, but we have gathered confirmation of that which was old and well known to us before. We find, as we averred at the setting out of our vocation as public journalists, and as we have had occasion to reiterate at many points of progress, we find the most extraordinary ignorance reigning between two classes of men whose dependence on each other is, or ought to be, more intimate and absolute than could be said of almost any two classes in the empire—we say is, *or ought to be*, for we are afraid that the sound and healthy action of the natural principle of dependence is strangely impeded or interrupted, and it is for us to examine into, to ascertain, and, if possible, to remove the cause. But where great impediments exist, the accumulation of long periods of misdirected efforts, mountains of opposing ignorance, these require great time, labour, and resolution, to remove. The two classes to which we allude as being, or requiring to be, more intimately connected and acquainted than hitherto, are the builders and the booksellers. The latter class are the privileged functionaries through whom the draughts of knowledge are to flow for the benefit and advantage of the builders; they hold the glass in hand through which many rays of the light of intelligence are to fall; and not knowing how numerous we are, how craving of knowledge, where we are seated, and the nature of the light that is to shine upon us, we are in effect debarred from our natural and lawful advantages. It is not to be said that the builders are to instruct the booksellers wholly in the administration of their office. A cry may be raised by the former, and it is being raised through us, which it behoves the latter to attend to. We, on the part of our class, say to the booksellers, Gentlemen, it is your province to transmit knowledge to us from the fund supplied to your hands; the high-roads and bye-roads, of which you are the trustees and toll-takers, are for our traffic as well as for the children of pleasure and frivolity, or the more serious sections of your customers. Trade knowledge is to us more essential than politics, pointless narrative, romance, or fiction; the solid bread of instruction in matters that pertain to our craft is at any rate as much to be desired by us as aerated waters, or inebriating wines, and infinitely better than the drugged and distilled extracts and gaseous fumes upon which the brains of so many are feeding. Pray, good Gentlemen Booksellers, take off the embargo of high tolls, and the prohibitions that affect our food, or at any rate give it free ingress and equal favour, so far as you are concerned, with the commodities that may, for aught we know, be well suited to the stomach of many others, but which we do not so much affect. Consider it worth your while, and we will make it so, to expose your bills of cargo and consignment for our valuables, as well as for the trinkets and toys of the multitude; wherefore, in two words, should not The Builder placard grace your door-cheeks as well as those of the mere chronicles of weekly gossip or idle fiction?

We said at starting with our "Precursor Number" that nobody thought it worth while to cater for the community of builders cheap books—that is, abundance of books are launched at every tide of your upheavings; the daily "flow" precedes the "ebb" with all the regularity and force of the ocean's waters; the quarters are hebdomadally defined, and not less so the full maturity of the moon by monthly issues; the full circle of our orbit is again marked by annual outpourings, but who sees, in the midst of all this, the daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly journal of building progress? Any body and every body is privileged to comment on architecture, albeit in a loose and passing manner; but as a class, entitled to have consideration and weight in the body corporate, social, or politic, Builders! (in which we include as usual architects) no one for a moment thinks of their claim, and yet, as we have urged so frequently before, builders are half a million at least of the male population of Great Britain.

We are drawn to make these remarks by the circumstance of the state of our circulation in Liverpool and Manchester, as well as in several other important yet secondary towns. We know how to distinguish between what may result from our own demerits and the imperfect knowledge of our workings, and we are free to state that not one man in five hundred of those who would read and desire to read The Builder, is yet aware of its existence. In Liverpool and Manchester newsagents and booksellers look astonished, many of them, when they are asked, in this period of the thirtieth week of our workings, if they have or sell The Builder, and it surprises us as much, in turn, as to walk into a coach-office in the same towns, or, which was the fact as to Manchester, to ask about a conveyance to Sheffield, and to be met by half information in reply.—"The Builder!" is ejaculated—"Oh, yes, by the way," says one, "we had the people asking for it to-day, but we know nothing about it;" and "we have people frequently inquiring for it," says another, "but we have not had it," and the like. Now this is a state of things that we cannot permit any longer to continue.

We are going to aim at no *revolution* in publishing matters, but we are bent upon effecting a reform, or at any rate to promote the healthy and just working of the functions of the publishing executive. We must either have builders' booksellers out of the class of booksellers, or make them out of the class of builders; but we know there is no need of any constitutional change, or change of power—it merely requires a right direction of the existing power, and our plans are now to be propounded for effecting this necessary and salutary change.

And since the remarks we are now making are intended and are likely to fall before the observation of many of our craft for the first time,—we mean the professors or practitioners of the art of building,—we must, at the risk of being tedious to our many constant readers, reiterate, for the hundredth time, that we scruple not to plead strongly for the support of our class, because we have sunk, or rather never entertained, many of the notions and views which prevail in the conduct of the ordinary class of publishing speculations. This Journal is the trade book, not ours; we are more in the light of its honorary conductors, than its profit-making proprietors. Profit, no doubt, will ultimately flow from its workings, and reward those who deserve for their diligence and devotion, in their proper meed. But the grand object aimed at is profit to the class, in collecting, amassing, and distributing, sound information. The price must speak of this: that price we would not have enlarged, but the usefulness of the journal to every extent. Let every man, therefore, put his hand to it; it will be his treasury of strength, deriving from and returning it to him.

We have sold largely, and, considering what we have learnt on our Liverpool and Manchester mission, we almost wonder how and why. Our paper has found its way into corners, but not into crowds. Every quarter of the kingdom has made it a guest, and welcomed and entertained it hospitably; but it has had no public greetings, unless it be here in London. A large number is sold in London, and every day adds to the gratifying testimony of approbation with which it is received by the most learned of our body. Many numbers are despatched through the activity of some of the principal agents here, but these, it would appear, find their way into secret or quiet recesses. Manchester and Liverpool, that will, in all probability, take between them as many as our whole present impression of between 3,000 and 4,000, know little or nothing of our doings or our whereabouts; and the remedy, or rather the agent for the removal of this grievance, this double grievance, affecting ourselves, but still more our class, is the establishment in those places, as well as in many others, of corresponding editors or contributors.

We therefore invite,—and we do it without any mock gravity or pomposity, while we as seriously assume an importance equal to boards or committees of management,—we invite the formation of provincial offices of correspondence. We shall obtain these in their full number and efficiency, which we say to inspire the courage of the diffident and to damp the confidence of the few, for unfortunately there will be a few of the sneering and the cynical. We invite the studious, the observant, the diligent, and the talented of our provincial brethren in the architectural and building sections to join hands with us in the discharge of our common duty. There are many gentlemen in the towns we have mentioned and elsewhere, disinterested and right-hearted, with talent equal to all the requisition, who will advance the public good, and also, we trust, nay, we are assured, their own legitimate interests by such co-operation. We would appoint a provincial editor's office at some principal publisher's, where all business could be transacted in correspondence with our office here, and charge upon that editor, whoever he may be, the duty of superintending his district, as a centre like unto our own; and we now throw out the matter for experiment in Manchester and Liverpool, where we would begin first; we await only the offers and the proper testimonials of candidates as associates. The matter is not to be taken in hand lightly, a word which we utter by way of caution; character and right principle must sustain the officiant. It is no light matter to have to discharge the duty of reporting, counselling, communicating for our class in any district; but in proportion to the weight of the duty is the honour, the consciousness, if not

To learn mo[illegible] PDF Compress[illegible] and OCR go to ThePaperlessOffice.org